

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, the claims have been amended to better define the invention. Support for the amendments is found in the specification as filed on pages 5 and 6.

Claims 1-2, 4-12 and 14-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Gilbert et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,795,530) in view of Culli et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,304,641). Neither of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest providing a forwarding number to a calling party if the calling party is authorized to receive it, otherwise providing an alternate message.

Gilbert et al. discloses a system and method for providing customized announcements to callers based on the called party telephone number and the calling party telephone number. See Abstract. When an incoming call is answered by a personal communications service, the system checks a database to determine whether or not the subscriber has identified that calling party number as a number that receives a personalized greeting. If the calling party number is in the database, the system plays the specific greeting selected by the subscriber for that specific caller or group of callers. Gilbert et al. does not disclose or suggest providing a forwarding number to authorized callers, and otherwise providing an alternate message.

Culli et al. fails to fill the gap. The embodiment of Culli et al. discloses a call forwarding system for an advanced intelligent network telecommunications environment. A calling party places a call which attempts to contact the destination by dialing an old telephone number of the called party. Upon recognizing that the calling party has called a telephone number which has been changed, the call is forwarded with a three digit code to a hub switch. The system can determine whether the calling party has elected to pay for forwarding the call to the new telephone number. See Col. 5, ll. 20-25. The call is completed if either the called party or the calling party has elected to pay for forwarding the call. The embodiment of Culli et al. does not disclose or suggest a system for allowing a called party to share their new number with some selected people, while keeping the new number a secret from other selected people.

The claims as amended call for providing a forwarding number to a calling party if the calling party is authorized to receive the forwarding number, otherwise providing an alternate message. Claim 1 as amended recites “providing the first announcement to the calling party if the calling party is authorized” “wherein the first announcement comprises a forwarding number of the called party” and “providing an alternate announcement if the calling party is not

authorized”. Claim 11 as amended recites that a “first announcement is provided to the calling party if the calling party is authorized by the called party to receive the first announcement, wherein the first announcement comprises a forwarding number of the called party”. Also, “an alternate announcement is provided if the calling party is not authorized by the called party to receive the first announcement”. Claim 21 as amended recites providing call forwarding information “if the calling party is authorized by the called party” and “otherwise providing an announcement”.

Furthermore, Applicants maintain that it would not have been obvious to incorporate the features of Culli et al. with the system of Gilbert et al. The system of Culli et al. discloses an embodiment for allowing a calling party or a called party to pay to have calls directed to a disconnected number forwarded to a new number. The embodiment of Culli et al. does not disclose that the called party can determine whether a called party is authorized to learn of the new number, such as with a specialized announcement. Moreover, Gilbert et al. does not teach using the customized announcement system with disconnected number. Therefore, there would have been no motivation to combine the customized announcement system of Gilbert et al. with the call forwarding system of Culli et al. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to the claims be withdrawn.

For at least the reasons discussed above with regard to the independent claims, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to the claims also be withdrawn.

Claims 10 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilbert et al. in view of Culli et al. and further in view of Kim (U.S. Patent No. 6,584,188).

Kim discloses an intelligent telephone system that includes a caller-ID circuit that extracts a call identifier from an incoming call. The system of Kim discloses keeping a call record log. None of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest that a log is kept for a disconnected number. Moreover, there is no motivation to combine the caller ID system of Kim with the system for handling disconnected numbers of Culli et al. A user would not purchase caller ID for a disconnected number. In addition, claims 10 and 20 should be allowed for the reasons discussed with regard to their respective independent claims.

CONCLUSION

For at least the above-identified reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the application be allowed. If for any reason, the Examiner believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any remaining issues, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorneys at (312) 321-4200.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vincent J. Gnoffo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

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